

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 01393 041608Z

42

ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1393

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MAR 76), (C) LISBON 1338 (DTG 021057Z MAR 76)

SUMMARY: MORAIS DA SILVA'S STATEMENT THAT THE AIR FORCE WOULD
OPPOSE SELECTION OF AN ARMED FORCES CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT CON-
TINUES TO REVERBERATE. GEN GALVAO DE MELO STRONGLY
BACKED MORAIS DA SILVA'S POSITION, AND PM AZEVEDO HAS ALSO
OPPOSED ARMED FORCES DESIGNATION OF A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE.
ONE INTERPRETATION IS THAT THESE THREE ARE MOVING TO BLOCK
ARMED FORCES AGREEMENT ON EANES'S CANDIDACY. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 LISBON 01393 041608Z

1. PRESIDENCY: AIR FORCE CHIEF MORAIS DA SILVA'S

REMARKS ON ANGOLAN RECOGNITION AND AIR FORCE OPPOSITION TO SELECTION OF A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE BY THE ARMED FORCES CONTINUE TO REVERBERATE IN LISBON (REF A AND B). PRESS PLAY HAS BEEN STIMULATED BY RELEASE OF TEXT OF MORAIS DA SILVA'S REMARKS AND BY GEN GALVAO DE MELO'S HIGH PRAISE FOR MORAIS DA SILVA'S POSITION UPON HIS RETURN FROM GERMANY. IN WHAT COULD BE A RELATED EFFORT TO BLOCK EANES'S CANDIDACY FOR THE PRESIDENCY, PRIME MINISTER AZEVEDO ALSO OPPOSED SELECTION OF AN ARMED FORCES "CANDIDATE" FOR PRESIDENT IN MARCH 1 "A CAPITAL" INTERVIEW (REF C). AZEVEDO SAID THAT SUCH A SELECTION WOULD REPRESENT "MILITARY PATERNALISM OVER THE CIVILIAN SECTOR." AZEVEDO OPENED THE DOOR WIDE TO HIS OWN CANDIDACY BY STATING THAT "THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, IF HE IS MILITARY, OUGHT TO BE INDEPENDENT AND PRESENT HIMSELF AS SUCH TO THE POPULAR VOTE.". AZEVEDO CONCLUDED: "IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO THINK ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF MY BECOMING A CANDIDATE."

2. OTELO RELEASED: FORMER COPCON CHIEF OTELO CARVALHO WAS RELEASED FROM PRISON MARCH 4 UNDER PERSONAL BOND. HE HAD BEEN HELD SINCE JAN 20 FOR HIS ROLE IN NOV 25 COUP. MAJ SANCHES OSORIO, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDC), RETURNED TO PORTUGAL FROM EXILE MARCH 3. HE HAS BEEN DETAINED IN CAXIAS PRISON NEAR LISBON FOR HIS ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN MARCH 11, 1975 COUP ATTEMPT. ON MARCH 3, FOUR OTHER PRISONERS FROM NOV 25 COUP ATTEMPT WERE RELEASED, REDUCING TOTAL STILL DETAINED AS A RESULT OF THE COUP TO 14.

3. SOARES: IN INTERVIEW WITH SWEDISH NEWSPAPER "ARBETET" PUBLISHED HERE MARCH 3, SOCIALIST LEADER MARIO SOARES DENIED THAT THERE WAS ANY THREAT TO DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL. HE REAFFIRMED PS POSITION THAT PARTY WOULD NOT ALLY WITH THE PPD, THE CDS OR THE COMMUNIST PARTY. IN A REMARK WHICH IS LIKELY TO BE USED AGAINST HIM IN THE CAMPAIGN, HE ALLEGEDLY ADMITTED TO THE "POSSIBILITY OF COPYING THE SWEDISH SOLUTION; I.E., A SOCIALIST MAJORITY WITH COMMUNIST SUPPORT IN PARLIAMENT."

4. ROSA COUTINHO: LISBON PRESS OF MARCH 3 REPORTED
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PAGE 03 LISBON 01393 041608Z

THAT ADM ROSA COUTINHO, WHO HAS BEEN IN ANGOLA SINCE FEB 16 HAS MOVED ON TO MOZAMBIQUE IN PAST SEVERAL DAYS. ROSA COUTINHO IS STILL ON MILITARY LEAVE AFTER REMOVAL FROM REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL IN WAKE OF NOV 25 COUP.

5. COMMENT: MANEUVERING FOR THE PRESIDENCY AMONG SEVERAL MILITARY CANDIDATES IS NOW OUT IN THE OPEN. WHILE AZEVEDO AND GALVAO DE MELO HAVE THEIR OWN CANDIDACIES TO PROTECT,

THE REASON FOR MORAIS DA SILVA'S REMARKS IS LESS CLEAR.
IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT HE IS MOVING TO STOP EARLY
ARMED FORCES AGREEMENT ON EANES'S CANDIDACY.

6. IN THE ABSENCE OF PRIOR SELECTION BY THE ARMED
FORCES, POLITICAL PARTIES ARE LESS LIKELY TO AGREE ON
A SINGLE MILITARY CANDIDATE. EANES, FOR ALL HIS
VIRTUES, LACKS POLITICAL STYLE. NAVY OR AIR FORCE
MEN SUCH AS AZEVEDO OR GALVAO DE MELO MAY ALSO CALCULATE
THAT THEY HAVE A BETTER CHANCE WITH THE PARTIES THAN WITH
THE ARMY DOMINATED ARMED FORCES. GALVAO DE MELO IS
A CDS LEADER, AND AZEVEDO AND SOARES HAVE DEVELOPED A
PARTICULARLY CLOSE RELATIONSHIP.
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